Cyber galaxies make the world go round

Subodh Varma | 110

Three years ago, two business consultants from Toronto - Don Tapscott and Anthony Williams - wrote a book that went on to become a big hit. It was called “Wikinomics” and dealt with businesses that used new communication technology to share, compete and ultimately succeed. Wiki, as we all know, derives from the Hawaiian word for fast. If Wikipedia is to be believed, the word was first used by Ward Cunningham of Portland, Oregon, to describe a website service he set up in 1995 for collaborative editing and creating by a community. Hence, “Wiki” and “Nomics” was about fast, shared, collaborative economies.

Now, Tapscott and Williams have written an immensely informative book called “Macrowikinomics”, which takes us into the equally fast-paced, dizzying world of global net-based collaborations. The range of collaborations is breathtaking, and we are just entering this realm. The possibilities are, according to the authors, infinite.

The book shows all that has happened so far - and what can or might happen in the future.

Ever heard of Galaxy Zoo? It's a collaboration between online astronomy enthusiasts to classify the billions of galaxies being photographed by diverse telescopes.

The idea was thought up three years ago by young astronomy graduate Kevin Schawinski as he sat in a pub. You register, get photos of galaxies, look at them, and decide whether they are spiral or what. That's it. Guess how many people are voluntarily engaged in this work? An eye-popping 2,75,000. This is one of many instances of online collaboration recorded by “Macrowikinomics”.

Others include relatively small collaborations such as an Iraq war veteran in the US who started a car design community. It now boasts 4,500 members.

And then there are major drug companies who put raw data from their research on say, diabetes, on the net. This, in the hope that people will pick it up, experiment and come up with the suitable molecule. There are also collaborations in financial services, universities and healthcare programmes.

The online world of newspapers, music, films and entertainment is not collaborative but increasingly interactive. So are sectors like government departments, regulators and the like. Tapscott and Williams have organized these disparate areas into neat boxes to give readers a grand view of the emerging cyber world.

At the outset, they caution that the argument is not that the real world will disappear but that it will become a better, more efficient, more democratic place for human life. However, they tend to go slightly overboard in some of their concluding predictions, but perhaps that's because today's technologies too would've seemed impossible 20 years ago.

That said, solving global warming or an economic slump might take more than cyber-networks. But the book's optimism is as infectious as the online communities it talks about.
Survival rate in gall bladder cancer doubles

AIIMS Study Shows How A New Chemotherapy Helps Patients Who Can’t Undergo Surgery

Koun teya Sinha

New Delhi: Life span of patients suffering from end-stage gall bladder cancer (GCC) has been doubled by doctors of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), thanks to a new chemotherapy regime. GCC is difficult to detect and diagnose. The only curative treatment for it is surgical resection—removal of gall bladder and its surrounding parts.

But unfortunately, 90% patients are diagnosed with the illness in the advance stage when surgery is no more an option. Majority of such patients do not live for more than six months. Till now, the most common treatment for GCC patients was supportive care like administering painkillers. The patients, who underwent this form of care, had a median survival rate of 4.5 months.

But now, a two-year study involving 81 patients — conducted by Dr Atul Sharma and Dr Amit Dwary of AIIMS — found that patients who received a new chemotherapy combination, using gemcitabine and oxaliplatin (Gemox), could live for 9.5 months (double of the present survival rate). The study has been published in the October issue of “Journal of Clinical Oncology.”

Study involving 81 patients found that those who received new chemotherapy lived for 9.5 months, which is double the current survival rate in the capital. Study shows that eight out of 10,000 women are affected with it.

Dr Sharma, associate professor of medical oncology at AIIMS, told TOI, “This is one of the first important studies, where role of chemotherapy has been shown conclusively to improve survival in GCC patients who cannot undergo a surgery compared to supportive care. This is a small but an important step in the treatment of such patients. We will now compare Gemox with another drug combination of gemcitabine and oxaliplatin.”

Dr Vinod Rana, head of medical oncology at AIIMS, added that, “GCC treatment till now was more symptomatic. Some patients with pain would be given painkillers. Others would suffer from jaundice or anaemia. But there was no definite evidence that treatment of these patients with chemotherapy improved survival. This randomized trial of Gemox clearly confirms prolonged survival for metastatic gall bladder patients.”

According to Dr Sharma, the comparison study will involve a larger sample size of 250 patients and will take three years to complete. It will be led by February 2011.

GCC is the most common biliary tract cancer. It is the fourth most common cancer among women in north India after breast, cervix and ovary. Only 10% patients are fit for surgery, and the rest are diagnosed at advanced and uncurable stage. Hence, they can only undergo palliative treatment.

Gall bladder: A pear-shaped organ that lies beneath liver in upper abdomen, stores bile—a fluid made by liver, breaks down starch and fat. When food is being brokens down in stomach and intestines, bile is released from gall bladder. There aren’t any noticeable signs, or symptoms in early stages of GCC.
Times of India ND
28/11/2010 p-6

Hyd varsity VC is favourite for JNU’s top job

Manash Pratim Gohain | TNN

New Delhi: The vice-chancellor of Hyderabad University has emerged as the favourite for the top post in Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU).

Dr Seyed Ehtesham Hasnain’s term as vice-chancellor of Hyderabad University comes to an end this December, while JNU vice-chancellor BB Bhattacharya’s term ended in June. Bhattacharya, however, remains in charge till a new vice-chancellor is appointed.

The university has been waiting for a new vice-chancellor for the past five months. The search committee is said to be in its final leg of selection. Though the committee’s November 22 meeting was postponed, sources in the ministry of human resource development said Hasnain was a favourite.

Former chairman of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) K Kasturirangan is heading the selection committee. The committee also has on board noted economist Nitin Desai and director of Indian Institute of Sciences P Balaram. According to the HRD sources, Hasnain’s name has been finalized and after two meetings of the search committee all that remains is the final decision. The name of ex-VC of Delhi University Deepak Pental was also doing the rounds. The race also featured JNU’s faculty which includes Jayati Ghosh from the Centre for Economics Studies and Planning, Zoya Hassan from the political science department and Rajendra Prasad from the School of Life Sciences.

Hasnain was a PhD scholar in JNU and was associated with the university’s Centre for Molecular Medicine. He worked briefly at the University of Delhi before leaving for a National Cancer Institute post-doctoral fellowship at the University of Alberta, Canada, where he was subsequently awarded the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research Fellow Award to work at the department of medicine.

He spent a couple of years at the Texas A&M University, USA, and returned to India in 1987 to work as a staff scientist at the National Institute of Immunology (NII). A visiting scientist at Oxford University, Hasnain was appointed VC of Hyderabad University in December 2005.
Jamia VC creates endowment fund in memory of his ‘Abba’

Manash Pratim Gohain | TNN

New Delhi: There is nothing new about instituting an endowment fund for the underprivileged, but Jamia Millia’s ‘Abba endowment fund’ (AEF) is different.

Not only is the fund being created from the salary of the incumbent vice-chancellor of Jamia Millia Islamia — Najeeb Jung — but it is dedicated to one Abdullah, who joined the

Professor Zubair Meena of Jamia said: “Abba is the brainchild of Professor Jung. The idea behind the fund is to benefit those students who don’t come under the ambit of other scholarships, which are structured. So, we decided to create something which is flexible and subjective as well. The fund is not yet institutionalized and the quantum of support has not yet been decided. It will vary according to the needs of the students selected for the scholarship.”

Another factor which makes the fund unique is the name. Meena said the name suggested initially was vice-chancellor’s endowment fund. “But our VC wanted to dedicate this to a father figure, whom he used to address as ‘Abba’ since the time he was born,” said Meena.

Abdullah joined the Jung family in 1938 for two-and-a-half ansas per month to look after the Jung brothers. But since 1947, Abdullah and his family did not take any salary from the Jungs and yet continued to serve them. All the keys to the safe used to be under Abdullah’s supervision. Abdullah used to accompany young Najeeb to the playfield and school and even taught him to ride a motorcycle. “I owed everything to this man. He was like a father figure to me,” Jung said.

Jung wishes to model the fund on the lines of Rhodes scholarships. According to university officials, a review of the fund would be conducted after six months and a meeting would be convened to make the fund sustainable. The team, which is managing the fund, is optimistic that it would be able to build a corpus of around Rs 5 to Rs 7 crore before Jung completes his term.

The fund created from Najeeb Jung’s salary is dedicated to Abdullah, who served three generations of the Jung family before his death in 2006

Jung household as a help in 1938 and served three generations of the family before his death in 2006.

Unlike any other scholarships, AEF is not structured and its core philosophy is to offer a flexible support system. So far, it has helped four students who could not afford to study in any university.

Among the beneficiaries are class XI student Fatima Naaz, who lost her parents in the Bhagalpur riots and Mehatab Ali, human resource management student.
Times of India ND
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7 JNU students still on strike

Manash Pratim Gohain | TNN

New Delhi: Seven JNU students, who claimed that they were failed in exam on the basis of their religion and are on hunger strike, continued their protest on Saturday. The students of Centre of Persian and Central Asian Studies have been alleging that they were victimized by their teacher, Dr Syed Akhtar Hussain, and failed in semester exam because they are Hindus.

JNU administration has offered them a separate exam during the winter break but the students are demanding that their answer sheets should be compared to those written by the successful students who scored the lowest. Hussain said the students are weak in studies. “They somehow managed to pass my three sessionals with low grade. But they failed in the semester exam.”

Rahul Kumar, one of the seven students, claimed Hussain is lying and misleading the administration. ‘

‘None of us got the lowest grade in his sessionals. We scored A or at least B and we have the marksheets to prove it. We want the administration to compare our semester papers with those written by successful student whose score is the lowest,” he said.

One of the protesters was transferred to Safdarjung Hospital on Saturday evening when his condition deteriorated due to the hunger strike.
HRD plans eligibility test for govt teachers

NITIN MAHAJAN
NEW DELHI

Nov. 27: The government is contemplating establishment of a teaching eligibility test that is similar to present testing system for recruitment of professors in universities. It would be compulsory for all aspiring teachers, vying for a government job, to pass this eligibility test.

Union human resource development ministry is considering a proposal prepared by the National Council of Teacher Education for establishment of a national-level aptitude test for teachers. While the test framework will be provided by the NCTE, it is likely to be conducted by state governments for recruitment of teachers in their respective states. Sources stated that the government plans to introduce the teaching eligibility test from the next academic year.

The NCTE would lay down detailed guidelines for states to follow while conducting the examination and the entrance test is likely to improve the quality of teachers.

Official sources stated that the aim of the testing was to provide teachers across the country to have a uniform standard when it comes to qualifications and aptitude. Currently only Haryana, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh have pre-testing requirement for school teachers.

However, with the government planning to recruit more than 10 lakh teachers for the effective implementation of the Right to Education Act over the next three years the need for a national level teaching eligibility test was felt.

The NCTE would lay down detailed guidelines for states to follow while conducting the examination and the entrance test is likely to improve the quality of teachers in the country.

“The need for such a test was also felt as several teachers’ training institutes have been de-recognised for failing to meet the norms and widespread irregularities in them,” sources added.

The NCTE has withdrawn the recognition of 585 institutes over a period of about 18 months for these irregularities.

The government is also likely to advise state governments that preference should be given to graduates for recruitment as teachers in primary and upper primary schools. Currently, people with class 12 and two-year diploma also get the job of teachers for primary and upper primary section.
Tribune ND 28/11/2010
p-7

Don questions UGC stance

Only regular candidates exempted from PhD entrance test

SUNIT DHAWAN/TNS

GURGAON, NOVEMBER 27
Strange are the ways of the University Grants Commis-
sion. It had declared that admission to the PhD course
would be made on the basis of an entrance test. As per
the regulations laid down, the PhD aspirants who hold an
MPhil degree would be exempted from the entrance test.

However, for reasons best known to the authorities con-
cerned, a large number of aspirants who had obtained
MPhil degrees through distance education were denied
this exemption; as only regular degree holders were
exempted from the test.

This, despite the fact that the MPhil (distance educa-
tion) course, duly recognised by the UGC, was offered by
a number of state universities. But thanks to the UGC move,
thousands of such candidates were left in the lurch.

Taking up the cudgels for the aspiring research scholars
who were denied exemption,

Prof SPS Dahiya of the Department of English and
Foreign Languages at Maharshi Dayanand
University (MDU), Rohtak, sought clarification from the
UGC authorities in this regard. In an application
under the RTI Act addressed to the UGC’s Central Public
Information Officer, Professor Dahiya asserted that the said
regulation made a clear demarcation between MPhil
(regular) and MPhil (distance education), since only persons
holding MPhil (regular) had been exempted from the
entrance test for PhD course.

Pointing out that the said regulations came into effect
from July 11, 2009, the MDU don asked the CPIO to clarify whether there was
any regulation similar to the one referred to above prior
to July 2009.

The letter asks to clarify whether a candidate who
obtained the MPhil degree

through distance education prior to July 2009 should not be exempted from the
entrance test for PhD as has been done in the case of
MPhil (regular) candidates.

It also questions whether a provision made in 2009 can
be made effective retrospectively, depriving the MPhil
(distance education) degree holders of opportunities equal
to their regular-mode counterparts. In response to the RTI
application, UGC Deputy Secretary and PIO BK Singh
informed Professor Dahiya that the issue of MPhil/PhD
degree completed prior to the coming into effect of the
UGC Regulations, 2009, was under the consideration of the
UGC: and any additional information was not available
on the subject matter.

Taking exception to the “evasive reply amounting to
non-supply of the required information”, Prof Dahiya
has now appealed to the UGC
Joint Secy to direct the PIO to supply specific information
on the said points.
HRD Ministry to set up panel to probe IIT-Kharagpur scam

Aditi Tandon/TNS

NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 27
The Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) has asked the HRD Ministry to look into the allegations of an IIT Kharagpur professor running an illegal institute on the IIT campus and awarding fraudulent degrees, and report back to it in four weeks.

Amit Kumar Ghosh is charged with setting up the Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE) on IIT campus and using his official position to run a suspect college. A police inquiry into the case is on with Ghosh accusing several top officials of the IIT of involvement in the said college.

The Tribune had in early November reported that subsequent directors of IIT Kharagpur relied on what they claimed was a “Presidential Secretariat letter” to run the said institute on their campus and award diplomas that had no legitimacy.

The IEE was set up on IIT Kharagpur campus in 1987 and kept functioning under the patronage of IIT directors claiming legitimacy of courses on the basis of a letter dated January 28, 1987, written by the then private secretary to the President.

The letter – which the HRD Ministry suspects is fudged – states: “The Associate Membership Examination of the Institute of Electrical Engineers (India) is recognised at par with Baccalaureate (Bachelor/Graduate) degree in Electrical Engineering of India and foreign universities aid is equivalent to the Associate membership Examination of the IEE (London) which is recognised by the Government of India for the purpose of recruitment to the superior posts and service under the Central Government.”

A copy of the letter was submitted to the ministry by IIT director D. N. Deka and the ministry had referred the same to the President House for verification.

Meanwhile, the contentious question is why subsequent IIT directors didn’t get the said Presidential letter investigated by the police for its veracity.
THE GREAT MBA PITCH

China, Russia woo Indian students

Chitra Narayanan
New Delhi, Nov. 27

The 'Big Four' of educational exports need to watch out. In its New Delhi leg, the annual QS World MBA Tour, which travels to 40 countries connecting leading B-Schools with students, is seeing intense pitches from geographies other than the US, the UK, Canada and Australia. While the 'Big Four' still dominate the fair, this year they have competition from China, Hong Kong, Italy, Israel, Russia and Greece, among others.

Greece: There could be no better ambassador for the Athens University of Economics and Business (AUEB) than its alumnus, Mr Omkar Patel. Standing at AUEB’s stall, Mr Patel exhorts the milling students to seriously consider the Greek school, citing his own example. At the age of 37, with 15 years of work experience, Mr Patel opted for AUEB as he found its programme “faster, good, and not a burden on the pocket.” At just €12,000 (about Rs 7.25 lakh), it may be cheaper than some of India's MBA programmes too, he claims.

Israel: Ms Rebecca Ash, class coordinator, the Sofaer International MBA, Tel Aviv University, paints a rosy picture of studying in Israel and the nation’s environment of innovation.

Russia: In another hall, Ms Daria Brodnikovskaya, MBA Programme Manager, Skolkovo School of Management, Moscow, extols the virtues of its business management programme that focuses on emerging markets. “It looks at Russia, China, India and the US as a classroom,” she says, explaining why the school would like to have Indian students.

China: At the China Europe International Business School’s (CEIBS) stall, it’s tough to get past the cordon of students hanging on to the words of Dr Ramakrishna Velamuri, Academic Director of its International EMBA Program. He tells them the relevance of studying in Shanghai. “There is a fight now on for top brains at worldwide,” acknowledges Ms Christiane Roth of Bocconi University from Milan, pointing out how more and more B-Schools are internationalising their campuses. Even CEIBS has 37 per cent international students — even though China, like India, is hard pressed to meet the educational needs of its own students.
Medical seats go waste at AIIMS

SC NORM VIOLATION Institute had cancelled counselling schedule despite having vacant seats, aspirants had moved court

Charu Sudan Kasturi
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NEW DELHI: The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) allocated seats in its coveted postgraduate programmes to go waste this year, following an admission policy which violates Supreme Court judgments, something that could have been avoided.

AIIMS cancelled its open counselling scheduled for July 28 meant for vacant seats, even though at least nine seats were vacant as on that date, documents accessed by the Hindustan Times and an affidavit submitted by AIIMS itself revealed.

Aspirants to those seats have challenged the AIIMS decision in the Supreme Court, where the institute, in its affidavit, has accepted that “some students did not pursue their course and so their seats became vacant”.

At least seven seats fell vacant before the date of the scheduled open counselling, which was called off.

Contrary to its own admission now, AIIMS claimed that there were no vacant seats while cancelling the open counselling.

The institute has argued that the vacant seats will not go waste and it will fill up those seats next year during admissions. But its argument, clearly mentioned in its affidavit, violates two earlier SC judgments that bar medical colleges from carrying forward vacant seats to the next academic year.

AIIMS officials had no explanation as to why they did not hold the open counselling as was scheduled even when they knew seats had fallen vacant.

The prospectus of the institute clearly allows open counselling. AIIMS has, however, rejected the students' allegation that the seats were allowed to go waste to facilitate "back-door entries.”

In the Medical Council of India vs Madhu Singh and Others, 2002 case, the SC has said that carrying forward vacant seats violates the MCI’s own regulations. "As the definition of 'admission capacity' shows it is the maximum number of students that could be fixed by the MCI from time to time for being admitted to the course and training.”

"By carrying forward the unfilled seats from one year to the subsequent, there is necessarily increase in the number of seats, that is, admission capacity," the order by a bench of justices Arijit Pasayat and Ruma Pal said.

This order also quotes a number of other judgments against carrying forward the vacant seats.
HRD ministry to probe fake IIT

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NEW DELHI: The human resource development ministry (HRD) will investigate the scam involving senior Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur professors who duped poor students into joining an unrecognised institute offering invalid courses using the IIT campus and brand.

The HRD ministry will set up a panel of academicians to conduct investigation into the scam that HT was the first to expose — on October 19.

The panel will submit its report within a month, top government sources said.

The decision came on a day students duped by the fake institute — called the Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE) — petitioned the ministry accusing IIT Kharagpur of trying to “protect” those guilty. The Central Vigilance Commission has also asked the HRD ministry to probe the scam.

“Deleting the name of the scammer from the record will not safeguard society, we need to find out the reason,” a source said.

The HRD ministry will appoint a panel of academicians who will look into the administrative and academic violations in this scam, a source said, adding that the probe report would be sent to the CVC as well.

As reported earlier, IIT Kharagpur aerospace engineering professor Amit Kumar Ghosh, and at least three other past or current faculty members of the Institute are under police investigation. Ghosh is also accused of forgery.

Ghosh, who was suspended by IIT Kharagpur after the HT expose, has accused two former IIT directors — Kasturi Lal Chopra and Shishir Dube — of being party to the operations of the fraudulent institute. Both Chopra and Dube have denied Ghosh’s allegations.

The IIT has accepted that it was alerted about the fake institute in 2007, but decided against exposing the racket. The IIT also allotted official quarters to the fake institute during Dube’s tenure as director; police sources and the IIT have confirmed.
फैकल्टी की कमी से जूझ रहा आईआईटी

अमर उजाला व्युरो

नई दिल्ली। देश के सभी भारतीय प्रोफेसरों की संस्थान (आईआईटी) फैकल्टी की भारी कमी से जूझ रहे हैं। दीर्घ अवधि का प्रतिभा की आयु सीमा बढ़ाने, अच्छे शिक्षकों की पुनर्नियुक्ति करने, शानदार वैज्ञानिक विभाजन करने, तथ्य वातावरण बनाने और सार्वजनिक अनुकूलन पर शिक्षण के लिए आयु में जैसे उपायों पर अमल के बावजूद समस्या जम कर रही है।

मानव संसदीय विकास मंत्रालय स्थायी तौर पर फैकल्टी भी निराश चलाए ताकि जो युवा आईआईटी के शिक्षण क्षेत्र में आर्थिक और स्वास्थ्य शिक्षण अभाव के लिए निर्णय मांगने वाले निर्णय निर्धारित करके कार्य चलाए। समस्या गंभीर है इसलिए निर्णय भी तत्काल करना होगा। स्थायी संसदीय समिति ने प्रोफेसरों की संस्थान (संशोधन) विषयक 2010 पर संसद में पेश अपनी सिंपोजी में उच्च शिक्षण संस्थाओं स्थापन के लिए आईआईटी में फैकल्टी की कमी पर गहरी चिंता जताते हुए यह बात कही। सिंपोजी के अनुसार,

संसदीय समिति ने मंत्रालय से भर्ती शुरू करने को कहा

इस मुरंगाल के आउट नई आईआईटी ही नहीं चलकर सात पुरानी आईआईटी भी दो चार हैं। मंत्रालय ने सुनिश्चित किया है कि दिल्ली आईआईटी में फैकल्टी के 146, कानपुर 135, हड़कन 199, मुंबई 146, खडगपुर 340, मद्रास 117 और गुवाहाटि में 80 पद रिक्त हैं। इसी तरह हाल में अर्थ रोपई आईआईटी में 57, मद्रास 44, गोवा नगर 46, जोधपुर 70, भुवनेश्वर 48, हैदराबाद 44, पटना 46 और इंदौर में 30 रिक्तियां हैं।
हीमोफ़ोलिया से जूझ रहा है एक होनहार आरआईटी स्टूडेंट को इलाज के लिए आर्थिक मदद की है जरूरत

विश्व संघ, दिल्ली

हीमोफ़ोलिया का इलाज बहुत महंगा है। इससे दबाव होता है कि इसके लिए आरआईटी स्टूडेंट को अपनी मदद करानी हो।

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पूर्व राज्यसभा सदस्य राजेंद्र सिंह ने कहा कि इसके लिए आरआईटी स्टूडेंट को अपनी मदद करानी हो।

आरआईटी स्टूडेंट को इलाज के लिए आर्थिक मदद की है जरूरत।